



Ekkehard W. Stegemann, *Der Römerbrief: Brennpunkte der Rezeption*, Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 2012.

This collection of essays edited by Christina Tuor and Peter Wick features 13 papers published in a variety of sources by Prof. Stegemann on Paul's letter to the Romans. It is comprised of three main parts:

Kreative Zugänge zum Römerbrief (pp. 13-86), *Paulus und Israel* (pp. 87-206), and *Der Römerbrief im Kontext kulturhistorischer Diskurse* (pp. 207-281).

Within each of those major divisions there are essays like *Calvin als Ausleger der Heiligen Schrift* (pp. 13-32), *"Set Apart for the Gospel" (Rom 1:1): Paul's Self-Introduction in the Letter to the Romans. Different Readings of Romans* (pp. 121-140). And *Apokalyptik und Universalgeschichte im antiken Herrschaftsdiskurs* (pp. 221-242).

Ten of the essays are in German but three are in English. All are engaging and some are more than engaging. This reviewer found Stegemann's examination of Calvin as interpreter of Holy Scripture (pp. 13ff) both enlightening and useful. Equally important, in my estimation, is his essay titled *Did Something Go Wrong in the Beginning?* (pp. 207-220).

The amazing thing about the collection, though, is the fact that it demonstrates Stegemann's mastery not only of the primary material but the secondary as well. Very few exegetes are competent Church historians and very few historical theologians are masterful exegetes. Stegemann bridges the gap between the two and this is exceptionally

important given the overemphasis today on specialization which more times than not leads to micro-specialization and the complete separation of disciplines.

So, for instance, Stegemann can observe

Calvins Römerbriefkommentar, der übrigens in weniger als zwei Jahren entstanden ist, hat selbst im Blick auf die Kommentare anderer Reformatoren wie Bucer, Bullinger und Melanchthon keinen Vergleich zu scheuen. Im Gegenteil.... (pp. 22-23).

He also studies Barth in an essay titled *Exilierung ins Zuhause der Schrift. Vorläufiges zu Karl Barth als Ausleger des Römerbriefs* (pp. 61ff), which turns out to be one of the best analyses of Barth's commentary on the letter to date. And it's only 6 pages long.

That's Stegemann's genius: he can say more in less space than some are able to manage in considerably more.

The high-water mark, though, of the volume is Stegemann's *Alle von Israel, Israel und der Rest: Paradoxie als argumentative-rhetorische Strategie in Römer 9,6*. (pp. 169-205). This carefully articulated study of a crux first appeared in 2006 and first looks at the notion of the 'true Israel' as that concept is found in early Christian apologetic. Next, S. tackles 'familiar and unfamiliar readings of Romans 9,6b.' In the third section S. explicates the 'end time' and 'salvation-history' role of Israel as presently understood by exegetes of the passage. Then, S. shows that 9,6 serves as something like a '... Negation einer falschen Schlussfolgerung aus dem Proömium (of 9:1-5). He turns next, in section 5 of the essay to a look at the 'Syntaktisch-rhetorische Struktur und Aussagelogik von Röm 9,6-8. And it all wraps up with an overview of 'Israel in Romans'.

Those wishing to crack the difficult nut, 'but what about Israel', should take in hand this collection and start with the essay just described. It takes us a good way forward. Indeed, the entire volume isn't – after all is said and done – a look backward, but a giant step forward.

I recommend it without reservation or hesitation. Its acquisition is money well spent.

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